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The Abortive Fenian Raid

ON MANITOBA.

ACCOUNT BY ONE WHO KNEW ITS SECRET HISTORY.

A PAPER READ BEFORE THE SOCIETY, MAY 11, 1888.

BY

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SECOND VICE-PRESIDENT OF THE SOCIETY.

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AN ABORTIVE RAID.

AN IRISH REPUBLIC IN MANITOBA PLANNED BUT CRUSHED EARLY.

Hon. Gilbert McMicken's Paper read before the Historical Society.

Politics and a cold, damp night did not prevent the Historical Society from turning out in force Thursday eve to hear the Hon. Gilbert McMicken recall the events of the Fenian raid in Manitoba. Judge Ardagh presided, and after the essay was read, it was discussed by Consul Taylor, Messrs. Ashdown and Bell and Profs. Bryce and Hart.

Towards the end of September, 1871, whilst holding a commission under the Great Seal of Canada as Commissioner of Dominion Police, and acting as secretary of the Intercolonial Railway commissioners, I was appointed Agent of Dominion Lands for Manitoba, in connection with other important offices and duties.

Owing to the disturbed state of public feeling in the Province I was hurried from Ottawa, and again, whilst stopping a day or two over at Windsor, arranging my family affairs, was still further hurried by a telegram from the Premier of the Government urging my departure, owing to information he had received relative to the threatened Fenian movement on Manitoba, in connection with the apprehended uprising of the half-breeds, subsequent to my departure from the capital.

My two days' stay in Windsor involved no loss of time, for anticipatory of just such a possibility, I had instructed my agents in the United States to meet me in Chicago prepared to communicate the fullest information respecting Fenian matters up to the latest moment. To keep trust in this behalf, and in fullest compliance with the wishes of the Government, I on the following morning took my departure from Windsor en route for Fort Garry. Accompanying me were my astute and courageous son George, and Frank Ritchie equally trustworthy; both most useful and reliable members of my Secret Service Police. Merely stopping over in Chicago between train connections, so as to lose no time, and meeting my agents promptly as expected and arranged, I received the exact information I needed in respect to the condition of Fenian matters and especially as to the projected movement upon Fort Garry. The body was at this time very much disorganized and General O'Neil found it impossible to galvanize into it a spark of enthusiasm by which O'Donnan-

hoe might be encouraged by an offer of either men or means to any available extent. The fact was amongst themselves, there was no fund, to provide either sustenance or transportation.

The "sinews of war" had all been dissipated at Eccles Hill the preceeding year.

O'Donnanhoe had not wherewith to pay his own fare from Chicago to St. Paul.

Under such circumstances it was not to be wondered at that only forty-one (41) volunteers were found foolhardy enough to form a forlorn hope and by means of contributions from sympathizers started in the wake of O'Donnanhoe—to conquer Manitoba. This was the meagre result of the most pathetic appeals, the earnest urgings and the specious statements made as to the absence of all opposing force—the overwhelming numbers of the Metis whose hospitable homes would at once yield quarters and hospitality while the rich plunder to be obtained from the Hudson's Bay Company's stores at Pembina and Fort Garry would serve to enrich them all to an unbounded extent.

O'Neil had managed to forward from their hidden depository in Michigan at Port Huron two hundred and fifty (250) breech loaders that had been converted from Springfield rifles at the Fenian armory in Trenton, New Jersey.

It may not be out of place here to mention that, in all, 5,040 in number of Springfield rifles had been so converted at this armory at an expense of \$13.50 each whilst the Colts Arms Manufacturing Company had tendered to effect the conversion for \$6.50 per rifle. You will see this operation caused a draft on the Fenian treasury of \$68,040. This aside, however, I proceeded by first outgoing train for St. Paul, going by way of McGregor and Prairie du Chene.

Arrived in St. Paul on Tuesday—I found as the communication was at that period—I could not proceed on my way before Thursday morning I utilized my detention as best I could in endeavoring to ascertain some points of information, but, except the acquisition of a knowledge of the route in its exigencies, discomforts and topography, I had little success.

In St Paul I met with the Honorable Alfred Boyd, a member of the Manitoba

Cabinet, and as a matter of course congratulated myself on the immediate prospect of some useful information in regard to the state of affairs in the Province. In reply to my inquiry (graciously enough received,) in a jerky way, and rather jocosely uttered; he informed me there was likely to be lively times there soon; pressing the query, he said the half-breeds intended pretty serious doings, and queried further said he thought they would make a fuss ere many days. It appeared uncommonly strange to me that a member of the Government should not refer more seriously to such a grave subject and being under such apprehensions, and still more so did it appear to me when he told me he was going to do some shooting on the way home, as he had his own conveyance, and he might be some weeks on the way.

All the elucidation I could extract out of this, to me, very strange manner of a Cabinet Minister, was a remark by a gentleman who knew him well, and who said in reply to my statement of astonishment: "Oh, he's queer."

On Thursday morning we started by train on the Breckenridge Railway, then in course of construction, and came to "Morris," at that time the terminal point. We arrived at an advanced hour in the afternoon and put up at the temporary station building for the night. It was Hobson's choice in this respect, the station building comprising at that day the whole town of Morris. Under the circumstances the meals were satisfactory and the quarters, on the plan of "forty for a garrett," acceptably good.

Here I fell in with my companions for the trip booked, like myself, from St. Paul to Fort Garry in their totality. Mr. Wylie, a gentleman, representing the firm of James Turner & Co., of Hamilton, and who in that capacity had been over the route several times previously, with him was Mr. James Turner, jr., son of the senior of the firm a fine young lad; in years somewhat short of his majority. Mr. Richard Fuller, also from Hamilton, with whom and myself an acquaintance-ship had sprung up some 16 or 17 years before. Besides these, there were Colin Strang a younger brother of Robert and Andrew Strang, well known citizens of Fort Garry then as they are now of Winnipeg; and a Mr. Klotz from Berlin, County of Waterloo, Ontario. These with myself, my son and Ritchie, made a party of eight. After supper, at about 9 o'clock, the arrival of the stage vehicle from Fort Garry was announced, and with it the Rev. Bishop Iache.

Mr. Wylie, who knew His Lordship, at my instance, introduced me to his reverence, whom I found at once exceeding affable and quite willing to converse freely on the topic which at that moment interested me most, and engrossed my thoughts. We deferred conversation until after the Bishop had rested a little and had fortified

himself physically with a good supper, as I had previously done for myself. This accomplished, I brooked no delay in possessing myself of such information as His Lordship might be disposed to communicate; and at once retiring somewhat apart from the other guests in the apartment, asked what he could tell me about matters at Fort Garry.

He spoke in reply with great good-feeling and candor but evidently moved with deep sympathy for the flock he had left behind him. He apprehended troublous times and feared great trouble was about to ensue forthwith. The Metis were intensely agitated over the unfulfilled promises of the Government and the harsh and insulting conduct of the more recently arrived Canadians from Ontario. Alluding to the Ontario volunteers who remained behind of the first expedition as intending settlers, he said they were so hostile and abusive as to invoke severe retaliation, and he feared ere many days scenes of a deplorable character. His Lordship of his own accord told me that on the previous evening he had met, where he stopped for the night at Macaulayville, O'Donnahoe and had a long interview with him; tried to persuade him not to proceed O'Donnahoe said he was going in with some friends as settlers, as he had a right to do under the recent order-of-council, and to take up homesteads. I asked the Bishop if he saw the friends O'Donnahoe referred to, and how many of them there were; also if Gen. O'Neil was with him. In reply he said there was a stranger with O'Donnahoe who might be O'Neil, and as to the number of men he could not tell how many, but as they walked along they seemed a very considerable number, and this in connection with the state of affairs at home gave him great anxiety and uneasiness.

I counselled and entreated his Lordship to return to Fort Garry with me, as doubtless his presence and influence would be all-powerful to allay the excitement and maintain peace. He said he was on a mission to Quebec according to appointment and the carrying out of this duty was paramount to all other present considerations. I spoke very candidly and plainly; said he would, if trouble ensued, as he apprehended, be looked upon as leaving the country under a full knowledge of the intended raid and insurrection, and had purposely left the country so as to give countenance and passive aid as well as encouragement to the movement; and he might take my word for it that it would not be many days ere the Globe of Toronto would express this view of the matter, and he could infer this as readily as myself. It was now between 11 and 12 o'clock, and on shaking hands at parting for the night, I besought the Bishop to ponder the situation and the free words I had spoken to him; a mutual "Good

night" was expressed and we parted, he to his couch and I to the work of preparing a duplicate despatch in cipher to the government at Ottawa. One to be sent by telegraph from the station, the other to be sent by His Lordship from St. Paul on his arrival there. This occupied me, letter-writing included, until between 3 and 4 a. m. As our coach was to start at 6 o'clock, and it required an hour previous to have breakfast, etc., I had no time for repose. Between 4 and 5 I went to the Bishop's bedside and again urged and besought him by every consideration in behalf of preserving the peace and preventing bloodshed to give up his trip to Quebec and return with me, that I would assume all his expenses, etc. He said he was deeply sorry, but his trip to Quebec was paramount with him and he must proceed thither at all hazards. He kindly consented to hand my duplicate despatch to the telegraph office in St. Paul on his arrival, which he did. We shook hands and parted.

It may be mentioned now that on our next meeting, which was on the 16th January, 1872, immediately after the Bishop's return, he reminded me laughingly of what I had predicted would appear in the *Globe*, saying "You see it was just so, but it did not make it any more the truth for all that."

I was fully impressed by this interview with a conviction that, however insignificant the Fenian force might be, there was great and immediate danger of a general rising of the French Half-breeds, and was burning with impatience to reach Fort Garry.

The morning was clear and cold; with one or two passengers added to our list, we started at 6 o'clock sharp, sped along fairly well over a good prairie road; saw many flocks of wild geese here and there on the ground; reached the first stopping place for exchange of horses about half past 8, this time on the edge of one of the small lakes with which Minnesota abounds, and while the horses were being got ready I went down to the lake shore for the purpose of trying how a new Breech-loading gun just presented to me by a few friends on the eve of my departure from Ontario would "carry," taking at my heels a beautiful Irish retriever, also a parting gift. I saw no fowl in the water except a solitary small "diver." To note how the shot would strike the water, I fired at this lone bird. Swift as the shot itself the retriever bolted and took to the prairie on the back track as if to the man-of-war. In his fleetest paces nothing could stay him or induce a look over his shoulder. He ran, and for aught I know is running yet.

Starting again, we proceeded in rather a lagging manner and reached "Pomme de terre" about 1 p.m. There is an old saying that "cleanliness is next to godliness." It needed little observation while applying this maxim to feel convinced

the latter quality could not be flourishing in that neighborhood—it was not only forbidding, it was revolting—yet we all ate more or less, as shipwrecked mariners are compelled to eat.

The next stopping place was "Old Crossing," somewhat of an improvement on the "Potato Ground," but the early completion of the railway to Breckenridge was an undisguised blessing, for the character of both places inspired a prayer for this change of route. At Macaulayville, which we reached about sunset, we found comfortable, clean and tidy accommodation, the hostess, an Eastern Townships woman, cleanly, good-looking, intelligent, and possessing a loving and loyal Canadian heart. Mr. Wylie had, in the course of his several journeys over the route, become well acquainted with this good lady and her husband, and stealing an opportunity whilst she with her assistants were busied in preparing a good supper for us, learned from her "ready discourse" a good deal respecting the Bishop's stay there the previous night, and his interview with O'Donoghoe, communicating this to me. Immediately after enjoying a hearty acceptable supper he made me acquainted with our good hostess. Her husband was a fellow-passenger in with us by the stage from Morris, hence I needed no introduction to him.

What she had told Wylie she repeated to me. Her intense Canadian loyalty had led her to play the eavesdropper while O'Donoghoe was closeted with Bishop Tache and repeated much of the conversation that was carried on between them. Interrupting her from time to time with trying questions and searching scrutiny I was convinced, apart from her exuberance of intense Canadian sentiment leading her to hasty conclusions, that what she told me was the truth pure and simple. What the Bishop had told me she fully corroborated. In addition, however, she informed me that a man of the name of Bodkin had raised in the village a company of men for the Fenian service; that they had that day been sworn in by Bodkin as their captain and were to start for the taking of Fort Garry on the morrow; that the men had paraded around the village that day with badges of green ribbon on their breasts.

Directly after this Mr. Wylie accompanied me to the office of Mr. Macaulay from whom we learned that what Mrs. ——— reported was quite correct; that Bodkin had got 23 men in all and several of them were his head sawyers. The loss of the service of these men was of serious consequence to him and he had endeavored by every means in his power to dissuade them from engaging in this wicked and foolish project, but without avail.

Frank Ritchie, to whom I have previously referred, had learned by some means that the hospital-sergeant with the U. S. force at Fort Abercrombie, which was immediately across the Red River, had just

returned from St. Paul and had slipped a word or two as if he knew something of the Fenians, and had fallen in with them. Ritchie and the sergeant had been intimate in Ottawa while the latter was a member of the Prince Consorts Own Rifles stationed there for a time. It was now about midnight, but we crossed the river by an extra dollar to the ferryman, and, to Ritchie's message sent into the sergeant, he promptly responded. He told me he knew Major Watson, who was in command of the Fenians; that he came upon them on his way in at Old Crossing where they were encamped for the night. He ridiculed the movement to Watson and laughed at their meagre force. Watson said it would be all right at Fort Garry, that O'Donnahoe and the whole native population would be ready to greet their arrival, and their ranks would be well filled up at Pembina. The sergeant said he saw but two wagons with the party. They had some arms, some barrels of pork, etc.; that their numbers were, so far as he could judge, not above forty if even so many; that they were a rough, hard looking set. All this information, coupled with what Bishop Tache had conveyed to me, very naturally caused me some anxiety, and induced serious cogitation. I consumed the rest of the night in writing dispatches, some for the mail and some in cipher to be sent by wire. At 6 a.m. Saturday I aroused Wylie and asked him to interview the stage agent at once and induce him to give us the coach as an express the rest of the way, telling him he must accomplish this at all hazards or at any cost, yet to economize as much as possible.

The result was, after no little difficulty in the negotiation, that by paying him five hundred dollars the coach would go through to Fort Garry with us without stopping anywhere over at night. A new way bill was made out, all names being excluded except Wylie, who figured on it as eight. The reason of this was to prevent my name appearing, as O'Neil being ahead of us it was well known to him.

Owing to this change and the preparations it entailed, we did not get away from Macaulayville until late in the forenoon, hence I had the opportunity of an interview with Mr. Bodkin and of seeing a number of green ribbon decorated rapscallions.

Except breaking a thoroughbrace, which caused a little detention, and a detestable collation of rubaboo, at a changing station, nothing noteworthy occurred until we arrived at Georgetown. It may be remarked here that the whole country through which we passed presented no sign of life or settlement; the desolation caused by the Sioux Massacre still reigned supreme.

Daylight was just gone as we reached Georgetown. The prairie all around seemed to be lighted up with a lurid conflagra-

tion at once to us, strangers to prairie life, as grandly imposing and dread-inspiring.

We had hardly freed ourselves from the coach when Mr. Wylie was accosted by Mr. Pearson, father of Harry and Alfred Pearson, since well known as good citizens of our good city. He addressed Wylie in a very excited manner and asked him if Mr. McMicken was one of the passengers, Wylie hesitated and answered evasively, owing to the injunction of secrecy respecting my name, as it might bring danger to the whole party. Mr. Pearson said; Wylie this is no child's matter, I ask you on the square if Mr. McMicken is with you; it means for him life or death, and my anxiety is to save him from the danger which lies in his way. Wylie replied "he is on the square too, and I'll introduce you shortly."

During this episode the order of the stage agent had been presented to the driver, who had only an hour or thereabouts before arrived over a stage of about 20 miles. Such a hurricane of blasphemous swearing as issued from that profane driver's lips I never heard before, and could not imagine so vile a lame lump of humanity to exist anywhere out of the "inferno." Yet even in this there was hid a germ of virtue, a trait of humane feeling, for it was in consideration of his team (which he idolized) that he was excited into the indulgence of such revolting profanity, polluting the very atmosphere around him.

However, when exhausted and some what solaced with tobacco, from Fuller and rum from Ritchie, Lame Jack concluded to feed his horses, while we fed, and get ready to go back and retrace with us the 20 miles over which he had come so recently.

At our introduction Mr. Pearson abruptly said: "You must on no account go on any farther, but return the way you came. You will be robbed and killed to a certainty." Whilst at Grand Forks in the morning waiting the stage to start he heard a Mr. Goldie state in the presence of 13 or 14 persons that his friend, Mr. McMicken, the Receiver-General of Manitoba, was on his way in by the stage which was to leave St. Paul on the Thursday and he had a million of dollars with him, and if there was any truth in what they said about the trouble at Fort Garry he felt awfully sorry for him.

Goldie was in the stage which preceded me in the start from Morris by two days, and had O'Neil and O'Donnahoe with a Mr. and Mrs. Latham as fellow passengers, and to them, not knowing them, he repeated this same statement. Mr. Pearson further said in coming down he met on the way two wagons laden with barrels and arms conveyed by a lot of as villainous cut-throat looking ragamuffins as any one ever saw together; then addressing me said, "You won't attempt to go on; no, no, you must go

back. You can do nothing to save yourself in this wild lone country—to proceed would be self-murder."

I said I would think the matter over and after supper would confer with him further.

I enjoyed a hearty supper, retiring from which in a state of happy satisfaction, I at once met my anxiously waiting friend Mr. Pearson. He resumed his advice, inveighing ardently against any attempt on my part to proceed on my journey. His advice so honestly, kindly, earnestly, pressed upon me in the thick darkness of night made doubly dark by the deep shadows thrown around us by the lurid glare of the encircling fires of the prairie was impressive and grave, but I had duty to perform, and though having nothing to boast of in the way of courage, danger could not sway me from a conviction of the necessity of doing all in my power to accomplish the performance of the duty I was charged with. At all hazards, then, I must advance. It need not be told how heartily I thanked Mr. Pearson, or how deeply I appreciated his warm-hearted friendship for me as a brother of "the mystic tie."

I said to him: I must proceed; kindly answer me one or two questions and I shall be fully prepared for emergencies. At what hour did you leave Grand Forks? At what hour did you meet the Fenians? At what hour did you arrive here? At what rate were the Fenians travelling?

His replies gave me a basis for the calculation that the party had by that time reached Grand Forks, and to assure him said: Now you can see I shall pass over these 62 miles scatheless, and when there will be governed by circumstances as I find them.

The prairie fires were raging in every direction far and near. Others present who knew nothing of Fenian dangers urged these as an insuperable obstacle to our getting on to-night. They said that it would be impossible to pass through them, and the team would not be kept under control, etc.. etc. Lame Jack was now, however, as fully determined to proceed as he at first had so strenuously objected. So we started. The team of four horses was superb. I do not think I ever saw four such handsome, well-conditioned, spirited horses hitched together, not even amongst those of the four-in-hand club in London; and notwithstanding their lately finished trip of twenty miles, were proudly champing the bit and fretting for the start. We had covered a distance of some three or four miles; all the party exuberant in spirits and enjoyment, when suddenly our driver held up and asked us hurriedly to leave the coach as he had to turn about and try, after escaping the fire, to find a way of picking us up after it had passed; out we all sprang quicker than it is written. As the stage left us I admired the sight as it receded from our view. The

white canvas covering, the proud stepping of the horses as seen in the light of the burning prairie afforded as weird a scene as did the witches in Macbeth over the caldron on the Scottish heath. The fire came roaring and leaping down towards us with, to us as it seemed, race-horse speed. The flames varying in height from 6 to 12 feet, immediate cremation seemed our inevitable fate. Furnishing each of the party with a few matches, a supply of which I always carry on my person, and some pieces of newspaper, I ordered them to spread out along the trail and, at distances of two or three yards apart, to fire the grass to leeward. This was done; none too soon, for young Mr. Turner got a slight scorching. As the grass burned, we followed the flames on to the seared and blackened sward. The flames from windward were stopped by the trail and the absence of anything to feed upon, and we were safe. The stage, having taken a turn far off beyond our vision, got in rear of the flames, and our friend Swearing Jack soon picked us up. From this to Grand Forks, although constantly on the alert and keenly observant at each stopping for change of horses, no incident worthy of note occurred except it be that, *nolens volens*, at Frog Point (I think it was) we were summarily made to exchange from our roomy 4-horse coach into a 2-horse jerky. Cramming and jamming was the order and some discomfort resulted, and our progress was proportionately slow. Sunday morning dawned upon us, promising a beautiful day. We drove up to Stewart's door at Grand Forks about 10 o'clock in the forenoon, hungry and tired. After a hurried and rather imperfect ablution Mr. Stewart soon had set before us wherewith to refresh and satisfy our appetites. In the meantime, however, I had seen Mr. Trail, the officer in charge of the Hudson's Bay Company's post there, and from him had Mr. Pearson's statement fully corroborated. He told me the marching Fenians got in there late in the evening and left about four hours previous to my arrival. The Fenians and probable half-breed troubles at Fort Garry were freely talked of. The population of Grand Forks at this time, within a radius of two miles, did not exceed 60 or 70 all told, so far as I could judge. After breakfast I had a consultation with Mr. Trail; he thought I had better not attempt to proceed, I asked him for a good canoe, that my son and Ritchie were adepts with the paddle, and I might escape the banditti by taking the river; thus removing danger from my fellow-passengers and leaving them at that point. Mr. T— said he would readily provide me with a canoe, but as the course by the river was at least three times longer than by the trail, my object would be defeated, and my canoe would be noted from the banks as an object of suspicion, and news spread amongst the half-breeds and Indians as if by telegraph.

I abandoned the idea of navigating my way onward, and concluded to stick by the Jerky. So the vehicle was got ready, I left all my cash but a few dollars and my papers to the safe-keeping of Mr. Traill and my baggage with Mr. Stewart. Part of my son's baggage and of Ritchie's was also left, thus easing the load on the jerky. Here I may note that, had the Fenians got hold of me, they would have been woefully disappointed in their financial expectations, for, having purchased three safes for the Government use in Detroit—one of them a burglar-proof—I had Mr. Hamilton G. McMicken get the quadruple combination of the lock and placed all the funds in my charge excepting \$5,000 in it, leaving it with the other two to be forwarded by ordinary conveyance. The delay occasioned some apprehension at Ottawa, for I was wired by Sir Francis Hicks (the telegraph line was now working), asking if they had arrived. Fortunately just that day, the 2nd of December, they were brought in by sleigh from Pembina, intact.

We started between 1 and 2 p.m. Previously, however, we saw a man by the name of Kennedy, who had arrived out from Pembina that morning, his mission being to rouse all the half-breeds from Frog Point northward to join the force at the international boundary by Tuesday afternoon. To me this looked like business, and increased my anxiety to reach my destination. We proceeded leisurely, for the two horses had a heavy load behind them. The stopping places for refreshment and change of team occurred about every 12 or 15 miles. At each we heard of the Fenians, and at each the same recurrence of most aversionable grub.

Night set in upon us and we hoped to slip past the Fenians, encamped somewhere on the route. We kept a strict watch. Fuller and Ritchie sat with the driver outside. They were to use as a watchword "Is that dog all right." We had a dog with us belonging to Ritchie, afterwards eaten by the Indians. About midnight, and as we were drawing near a changing station, "Is that dog all right?" in clear tones struck our ears. Stillness and expectancy of undefined apprehension ruled us all. Soon we heard Ritchie saying "A fine cool night for travelling boys;" the response, "You bet," we heard, and straining our eyes through the openings in the canvas-covered jerky, we saw the wagons and some of the men. The coach soon turned off the main trail, going in to the changing station. Here we got some refreshment—beefsteak, bread, potatoes and tea. Our stay here was about one hour. Our horses were fresh and we started out at a rattling pace. Very shortly after reaching the main trail; again we passed the Fenians. Three were ahead of the wagons as an advance guard, and five were behind them. Nothing was said, as I had

ordered, and we shot ahead in silence and with such speed as we could. At the next stage house we picked up a driver who knew nothing of the road, having only come in from Pembina over it the previous day. He, we found, was an Irishman Americanized; a full-blown Fenian. Ritchie and Fuller pretended to be Americans and in full sympathy with his views. He told them he had been sworn in about two weeks ago, that they would see fun at Garry although he did not know how it would be now, as the leaders had made a big blunder. The raid was planned to take place in November when the route by the lakes could not be passed over, and now the raid was ordered for Wednesday. All were to gather at Pembina then, so as to start on the march for Garry Thursday morning. "It was a d—d mistake," he said, for now the Canucks could send up their soldiers by the lakes and rivers. Still he said, "You'll see fun anyhow."

We neared Pembina as the day was breaking and were astonished to find a man on horseback close to, and following, our coach, dubious of the road we pulled up, and I inquired of the man on the horse which was the way into the village. He said he was a stranger and did not know; was following us as he supposed the stage would take the right road. Before this, however, at some unperceived bend in the road, we lost sight of the telegraph poles (the poles were planted, but no wire strung as yet). We halted for consultation. Rumor said that at that time there were 1,500 men encamped upon the boundary at St. Joe, and Wyllie was afraid the driver was heading for this encampment. I struck a light, saw what time it was, and scanned a pocket compass. The course of the Red river was known, and so a little calculation and reflection assured me that keeping the course we were pursuing we would strike the Red river before very long. This was correct; in about 20 minutes the poles were hailed with joy and a heap of nervousness abated. Before entering Pembina, knowing that we would overtake the previous coach there and find Mr. Goldie at the inn, I instructed Mr. Wyllie (who knew Robertson, the innkeeper) to find out before I got out of the coach what room Goldie occupied. He did so, and I at once sprang out with face blackened and begrimed with the black-burned dust from the prairie, rushed into Mr. Goldie's room. I found him just up and buttoning his suspenders. Having a Colt's navy revolver in my hand I addressed him in language interlarded with what might have been taken as lessons learned from *Lame Jack* and referring to the extreme danger he had thrown around me, forbade him on penalty of instant death to show any recognition of me before any one, by word or look, and not to go out of range of my observation. He trembled and promised, I promising to explain fully

when we met at Fort Garry. Poor man, his cup and saucer rattled together as he attempted to take a cup of coffee, but he was mum and undemonstrative. Here the stage people wanted to put us all together into one coach, I would not assent and insisted on my rights as having hired mine as an express. I managed to have the "regular," with Goldie and Mr. and Mrs. Latham start first, followed immediately by my vehicle. While waiting in Robertson's O'Donnahoe sat at one end of the stove, I at the other—thanks, however, to my precautions and our stage arriving 2 days ahead of time, no suspicions were aroused as to my being there; few were astir, as it was only 6 a. m. We were now in the crisis of our danger, and excitedly apprehensive and watchful, for a couple of men on horseback armed with repeaters could have made us an easy prey.

Coming in view of the post which conspicuously pointed out what was then assumed as the boundary line, we felt as if nearing home, as coming under the aegis of neverfailing British protection, forgetting, or casting aside all fears as we passed the welcome post, our pocket pistols were drawn and the remaining drops of inspiring bold John Barleycorn were quaffed to the toast of "The Queen," and cheer after cheer testified to our loyalty and returning confidence and courage. Changing horses at the Marais, at Kline's (here a dinner characteristic of the route and needing starvation sauce, a little going a long way) next in St. John Baptist, then at D'Lorme's we arrived, the two conveyances always within hail on the south bank of the Assiniboine. About sunset Fort Garry was reached safely on Monday the 2nd day of October 1871. The river was very low the crossing narrow, the ramshackle old scow in use lay on the north side, and the halfbreeds in charge made haste at great leisure, and more time than was at all necessary was consumed in bringing us over; down what is now Main street, then an open prairie road, we were driven with a dash up to the door of the Davis hotel. Nothing inviting, everything forbidding—dirt, discomfort and whiskey abundant. What few houses there were, mean and insignificant in appearance, and as if dropped down here and there at random, without order and at haphazard.

A room could not at once be allotted to me although I proposed that my son and myself could room together. Davis was the autocrat of the whiskey ranch and we must wait his will to eat and sleep. It may be readily inferred that having come in from St. Paul's in 4 days, and with less than four hours sleep, I stood greatly in need of the latter, and of the former, seeing the kind of food we had on the way "it goes without saying." Supper announced, I entered a room with a table running lengthwise in the middle of it—every seat filled with occupants some with

coats on, others without. Several who thought it no breach of law or etiquette to eat with unwashed hands. I managed to hustle into a seat and satisfied my stomach pro tem with a fried gold eye, a boiled potato, in his jacket fortunately, and a cup of tea. I was not allowed to enjoy even this undisturbed, for Capt. Villiers, the chief of Provincial police, in gold lace and spangles, introduced himself to me and said the Lieut.-Governor had heard of my arrival and was anxious to see me; that it was now dark and he would wait and see me up to Government House. He needed not to wait long; we walked up and I entered the vice regal hall, begrimed with the black dust from the burnt prairies, which the Red River water could effect little in the way of cleansing power. Shirt and collar in keeping with the color of the epidermis—having been donned at Grand Forks 36 hours before—I felt my outward appearance had little to recommend me to a favorable reception, but the Lt.-Governor, Mr. Archibald, received me with demonstrations of gladness. I apologized for my appearance and on not having letters of introduction, as I had left all but as I appeared before him at Grand Forks. He said I needed no introductory papers for he had heard from headquarters and otherwise of me and was indeed very glad to see me.

We entered at once into conversation upon the state of affairs. I told him exactly how matters stood, with the Fenians and assured him the report of a large gathering at St. Joe was a baseless rumor; that O'Donnahoe and O'Neil could not possibly muster over 70 men at Pembina, and probably not half that number. He had nothing to fear from outside forces; all would depend on how it stood with the Metis and others within the Province. He said there was every reason to apprehend a rising; that he was doing what he could to operate on them through Fathers Dugas and Ritchot, but they insisted as a condition that he would give them a satisfactory assurance that the promise of a full amnesty would be fulfilled at once. Without this they could exercise no influence upon their people; that Riel had their hearts and he would not yield unless the amnesty was granted forthwith. After some discussion upon the state of affairs, Mr. Archibald having told me of the unpleasant state of feeling between the Canadians, as they were called, and the Halfbreeds; that it was bitterly hostile on both sides, and towards himself personally as Lieutenant-Governor, the former as a whole were malignantly antagonistic. His Honor then said, Mr. McMicken, you have had large experience in circumstances of this kind, and I have had none. What would you advise me to do? Without hesitation I advised the issue of a proclamation calling the whole body of the people to arms, and this without a moments'

delay. Assuring him if he could but get 400 or 500 men under arms he could make himself master of the situation, but all depended upon the celerity with which it could be done, for his force must be enrolled before the Metis took the field. This is Monday night, I said, and the raid was planned to be made by crossing the line on Wednesday afternoon or Thursday morning. Mr. Archibald said "there are but 70 men in the fort (volunteers) under arms now, and I do not know how far the feeling obtains amongst them that is so vindictively shown towards me by the Canadians in the village and settlements, and I fear the proclamation may not receive a hearty response."

Dread nothing on this score, I said; I know no one here personally, but I do know well and thoroughly the genius and bent of mind of the Ontario people, in fact their human nature, and call upon them without distinction of party or prejudice, to rally round the nation's flag and to stand by their Queen. You will find not a lagard among them, not even the most hostile in feeling against yourself.

The proclamation was decided upon, was forthwith drawn up, and Mr. Cunningham, who was the government printer, and publisher of the Manitoba newspaper, was called from down stairs where he had been waiting to learn the upshot of the interview between the Lt. Governor and myself; and to him was handed the draft of the proclamation with instructions to have it printed before morning—it was now midnight and Capt. Villiers would see to its distribution and posting. This celebrated document was follows, printed in a wonderful display of type:—

(The Royal Arms.)

PROCLAMATION.

PROVINCE OF MANITOBA.

Victoria, by the grace of God, of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, Queen, Defender of the Faith, etc.

Sgd. Adams George Archibald.
To our loving subjects, the inhabitants of the Province of Manitoba,

Greeting:

Whereas, intelligence has just been received from trustworthy sources that a band of lawless men calling themselves

FRONTIERS

have assembled on the frontier of the United States at or near Pembina and that they intend to make a raid into this province, from a country with which we are at peace, and to commit acts of depredation, pillage and robbery, and other outrages upon the persons and property of our loving subjects the inhabitants of this province. While not unprepared to meet the emergency with our regular forces, we do hereby warn all our said loving subjects to put themselves in readiness at once to assist in repelling this outrage upon their hearths and homes. We enjoin them immediately to assemble in their respective parishes and

ENROLL THEMSELVES.

For this purpose we call upon all our said lov-

ing subjects, irrespective of race or religion, or of past local differences, to

RALLY ROUND THE FLAG

of our common country. We enjoin them to select the best men of each locality to be officers, whom we shall duly authorize and commission, and we enjoin the officers so selected to put themselves in immediate communication with the Lieutenant-Governor of our said Province. We shall take care that persons possessing military skill and experience shall be detailed to teach the necessary drill and discipline. All officers and men when called into service shall receive the pay and allowances given to the regular militia. The country need feel no alarm. We are quite able to repel these outlaws if they were numerous. The handful of them who threaten us can give no serious difficulty to brave men who have their homes and families to defend.

RALLY THEN AT ONCE!

We rely upon the prompt reply of all our people of every origin, to this our call.

In testimony whereof, we have caused these our letters, to be made patent, and the great seal of Manitoba, to be hereunto affixed.

Witness our trusty and well-beloved the Honorable Adams George Archibald, Lieutenant-Governor of our Province of Manitoba, member of our Privy Council for Canada, etc., etc., at our Government House at Fort Garry, this 3rd day of October, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and seventy-one, and in the thirty-fifth year of our reign.

By Command,

THOS. HOWARD,
Provincial Secretary.

On the following evening a public meeting was held at the police station, then standing about where the St. Julien restaurant now is. It was addressed by the Revs. Black, McLean and Young in fervid expressions of loyalty and patriotism.

The enthusiasm of the audience was unbounded. The wonderfully large assemblage astonished me, for it was difficult to imagine where they all gathered from. But still more was I astonished when, ere 48 hours had elapsed from the issuing of the proclamation, over 1,000 men had enrolled themselves. Where were they domiciled? It was to me a mystery; but the enrollment was a great and gratifying fact.

The Hudson's Bay officials to a man enrolled themselves, and formed a goodly company in number and physique, under the command of Capt. D. A. Smith, now Sir D. A. The most virulent of those antagonistic to the Lieut.-Governor were amongst the first to offer their services. A strong company of unswerving Loyalists were placed under command of Mr. Stewart Mulvey, late an ensign in the first expedition of volunteers from Ontario. I think they numbered nearly 100 strong.

Mr. Cunningham organized a company as a "Home Guard" with Mr.—now Mr. Justice—Bain as his lieutenant.

The difficulty now was to arm the number who had enrolled themselves, for besides the arms in the hands of the 79 regular volunteers the total number at the command of the Lt.-Governor was only 650. Rather unwisely, Mr. Cunningham, the bold captain of the home

guard, obtained arms for his command. This soon became known and the Kildonan men represented by Mr. Harrower and John Sutherland, then, and still known as "Scotchman," protested most strongly against the distinction, and insisted upon having arms served out to them, the scarcity of supply could not be made known to them and they were unreasonable. Mr. Sutherland, whose courage and loyalty appeared far above boiling point, said they must have arms or know the reason why. "Bombardier had received a blow and Cornontrotontologus must die." Harrower said "Mr. McMicken, I admit you have the best of the argument, but 'the Kildonan men must have arms for all that.'"

That morning I sent Ritchie off by the stage to Pembina to watch matters there and report. I endeavored to obtain two saddle horses for myself and son to go to the Hudson's Bay Co's. post near Pembina, but failed, and was obliged to remain at the fort. Many perplexing difficulties cropped up, to annoy the Governor. Fathers Ritchot and Dugas had daily interviews with him but they invariably ended by their refusing to urge Riel to enroll with his people unless the amnesty was assured to them. During the night of Tuesday or Wednesday one of the cannon was spiked. The circumstance, at the time was suspicious and rather alarming, but it had no ill effect.

On Monday morning Major Irvine who was in command of the volunteers assembled a force of 200 men and in the evening dull, dark and drizzling, started out with all the panoply and pomp of glorious war, crossed the Assiniboine with some confusion and delay, baptizing the chief of the commissariat, Major Peebles, in the river. This valorous force with the temerity begotten of the occasion marched without halting to St. Norbert. Here Pere Ritchot was indebted to the good feeling and watchfulness of Capt. Mulvey for his escape from a danger he little suspected. Three or four scouts, factors in the Hudson's Bay Co. started out for the Company's fort at Pembina. Except an intimate acquaintance made with the prairie by Mr. Factor Christie having been catapulted over his horse's head nothing special occurred on the way.

Capt. Villiers, of the police, was directed to establish videttes between Fort Garry and Pembina for the purpose of maintaining communication and obtaining information. The least said of this service the better; it was not only nil—it was worse.

In the meantime, however, the banditti under O'Neill and O'Donahoe to the number of 15 or 20 had crossed the boundary and stormed the Hudson's Bay fort, opposed as vigorously as he could by the officer in charge, Mr. Watt, who had but one arm. They commenced rifling the stores, and when about preparing to establish themselves there Col. Wheaton, of

the United States regular troops, dispersed and captured a number of them. This, thanks to the prompt and high-minded Wheaton, ended the raid—how O'Neill and O'Donahoe and those with them were dealt with by the United States civil authorities is a matter of historical record and does not come within the object of this paper.

Meanwhile great excitement prevailed in the then hamlet, the germ of Winnipeg and Fort Garry. Apprehensions were entertained that Col. Irvine and his small force would be gobbled up by Riel and his followers. Rumors obtained that the villagers were to be attacked by a large force of Metis from St. Boniface. The home guard were active; several were incarcerated on suspicion. In Mr. Cunningham's eyes an Irish name, especially if the person who bore it was a Roman Catholic, was a strong ground for suspicion and a justifiable cause of arrest.

On Sunday forenoon, the Raid being a thing of the past, Mr. Archibald felt very anxious on the score of the arrests made by Cunningham's home guards, and requested me to give it my attention. I proceeded to the police station in the cells of which the prisoners were held, and on the way introduced myself to Mr. Bannatyne, who was a J. P. for the province. He accompanied me and informed me that one of those held in custody was a nephew of his. Mr. Ashdown, also a J. P., joined us as we entered the office of the police clerk, Mr. Barton, who was then the officer in charge of the station. I asked him to show me a list of his prisoners, this he readily complied with.

There were six in number. Taking them in order consecutively, I inquired who ordered this man's imprisonment? He answered, Mr. Cunningham. By what authority did you receive him or retain him in custody? By Mr. Cunningham's order. A written order? No. Have you no written order or warrant of commitment? No. And so on through the list. Turning to Messrs Bannatyne and Ashdown, I asked them if the laws of Manitoba authorized such despotic authority, and the holding of these men as prisoners under such circumstance. No, no, they both said "certainly not."

I immediately directed Mr. Barton, under my authority as an officer of the Dominion specially charged with matters within the criminal jurisdiction of the General Government, and the sanction of His Honor the Lieutenant-Governor of the Province, to set the prisoners at liberty. This he instantly did, greatly to the relief and satisfaction of them and their friends.

One more episode, and I shall draw to a conclusion:

On that Sunday Riel, at the church door at St. Norbert, harangued the people. He told them their friend O'Donahoe had failed, and it became them to offer their ser-

vices to the Governor. Quite a large number of them turned out on horseback and came up to St. Boniface on the south bank of the river.

Senator Girard, then a member of the Provincial Government, came over and with much precision induced Mr. Archibald to cross over and formally accept the proffered services of Riel and his followers. This be it noted, when all occasion for his services had passed away, so that the move on Riel's part was a hollow mockery.

Humane feelings and a desire to conciliate prompted the Governor into yielding, contrary to his convictions and better judgment on this occasion.

The memorable handshaking took place, a scene over which prudence or other virtue draws the veil.

Yet one more episode and I have done. On the Tuesday following, a squad of Metis, numbering some thirty or more, headed by Mr. Joseph Royal, mounted on horseback, accoutred in their own fashion and with much braggadocio binding themselves to give a good account of the enemies of the Province wherever found. The only enemy, however, they were likely to encounter besides the majority of themselves (for of the lot it might be doubted if in the bosom of any of them excepting Pascal Breland and one or two others, a heart had a beat of loyalty within it) lay in the large quantity of 50 over-proof rum which Royal insisted should be served out to them and would not stir without it.

They had a glorious time of it, a time of free frolic and feasting never in all their lives before enjoyed, and certainly never since. But their good fortune did not end here. On their victorious return from their valorous campaign on the exhaustion of their commissariat and the rum, Mr. Royal demanded and obtained for himself and each member of the squad, six dollars per diem. To this extent did so many of the Metis profit by the threatened insurrection and the raid.

The raid is ended. It is my turn to end; I have done.

DISCUSSION.

The chairman, after expressing his high personal appreciation of the paper of Mr. McMicken, invited a general discussion of its topics and suggestions.

Mr. J. H. Ashdown, concurring in the obligation of the society and public to the lecturer, enlarged upon the incidents of the Archibald administration, criticizing what he regarded as its want of genuine Canadian policy.

Dr. Bryce recalled vividly the incidents of the trial of O'Neill and others in St. Paul, at which he attended while en route to Winnipeg.

U. S. Consul Taylor, referring to the brief reference in Mr. McMicken's paper to the heroic action of Bt. Col. Lloyd Wheaton, captain of the 20th U. S. infantry in command of Fort Pembina, in

surrounding with a military force the Hudson's Bay post of Fort Pembina, now West Lynne, and capturing the Fenians who had occupied the post, remarked that he felt bound in justice to Col. Wheaton, to explain the circumstances which attended such an invasion (apparently) of Canadian territory. Mr. Taylor had obtained information early in September 1871 of the probability of a Fenian attack upon Manitoba, which he communicated to Governor Archibald and his ministers and received an assurance that neither the Manitoba authorities nor the Canadian Government would object to a movement of American troops across the international boundary for the suppression of a violation by Fenians of the Neutrality Laws of the United States. On the 11th of September a full statement of the situation was forwarded to Washington. On the 19th September orders were sent to Col. Wheaton to make the proposed armed intervention, which he gallantly executed, and under date of October 5 was able to communicate as follows to the United States Consul at Winnipeg: "I have captured and now hold 'General' J. O'Neill, 'General' Thomas Curley and 'Colonel' J. J. Donelly. I think further anxiety regarding a Fenian invasion of Manitoba unnecessary." It is further due to Col. Wheaton to state that the ground for the release of the prisoners by U. S. Commissioner Spencer at St. Paul was that the acts for which they were charged, were committed on British Territory, and beyond the jurisdiction of the court, a circumstance, however, which did not deter the English Government from expressing and conveying their thanks to the American commandant of Fort Pembina. An additional circumstance, relating to the personal intervention of Gen. Grant, may now be mentioned, which was his transmission of a despatch to Lord Lisgar, Governor-General of Canada, permitting the movement of British troops if necessary through American territory. The Consul felt justified in adding that it is within his personal knowledge that in 1866, or whenever the first Fenian invasion of Canada occurred, William H. Seward, Secretary of State at Washington, left it entirely with Lord Lyons whether President Lincoln should issue a proclamation denouncing the Fenian movement and otherwise indicate vigorous measures for its repression, but was dissuaded by the British Minister on the ground that undue importance would thus be given to an otherwise insignificant agitation. In 1871, in respect to Manitoba, a more vigorous policy was deemed necessary by the civil and military authorities of the United States, with the happiest results, as was apparent two years later when Consul Taylor had occasion to interpose in behalf of his fellow-citizens of Minnesota who had become involved in the celebrated "Lord Gordon" case. In conclusion

the speaker could not forbear a personal and official tribute to the eminent services of Mr. Gilbert McMicken in the adjustment of numerous complications during the American civil war and subsequently along the Canadian frontier. [Applause.]

Mr. C. N. Bell, the 1st vice-president, said that he remembered well the scenes in Winnipeg at the meeting called by Lt.-Gov. Archibald to enroll volunteers for service against the Fenians. Within two hours after the meeting Capt. Walker (now Judge Walker of Brandon) had secured a full company to proceed to the front. He was a member of that body which took with them a small brass rifled cannon, which was afterwards reorganized as the Winnipeg Field Battery. When leaving for the front the great delay experienced in crossing men and stores over the Assiniboine on an old scow, caused great hardships to the men who stood on the south bank for a long time exposed to a bitter cold rain. The march to St. Norbert that night in perfect darkness through deep mud, was a pretty hard ex-

perience, for at one moment the muzzle of the rifle of a man in front punched one in the face while the butt of a rifle from behind banged the unfortunate on the back of the head. The little cannon, which the speaker believed, was the one since used at the Cut Knife fight, was frequently upset in the mud. One incident that he recalled to memory was the clamor raised in the volunteers camp when it was learned that Riel and his Metis had appeared at St. Boniface and been received by Lieut.-Governor Archibald. Many of the men demanded to be allowed to return to attack Riel who was held to be accountable for the whole trouble, but Col. Irvine, who was in command, smoothed matters over. The troops, including the regular force of about 75 men, Capt. Walker's company of artillery, Capt. Mulvey's corps of 100 men and the Scouts, proceeded as far as Crooked Rapids before returning to Winnipeg, where the Home Guards, consisting of prominent citizens like the Hon. A. G. B. Bannatyne, Judge Bain, etc., received them.